



We are pleased to announce the appointment of Dr. Richard T. Olsen as the Director of the USDA-ARS United States National Arboretum (USNA) in Washington DC, effective May 3, 2015. Dr. Olsen is currently a Research Geneticist and Lead Scientist in the Floral and Nursery Plant Research Unit (FNPRU) at the USNA. He served as Acting Director of the USNA in 2014 and most recently as Acting Assistant Director of the USDA-ARS Beltsville Agricultural Research Center.

Dr. Olsen has a bachelor of science degree in landscape design (NC State University), a master degree in horticulture (University of Georgia) and a doctorate in horticultural science (NC State University). He joined the USDA-ARS in 2006 as a research geneticist for the urban tree breeding program at the FNPRU. He reinvigorated the USNA's urban tree program and developed new woody ornamental breeding projects utilizing genetic tools such as ploidy manipulation and interspecific and intergeneric breeding strategies. His research has focused on the development of superior landscape trees with pest and disease resistances

combined with non-invasiveness. Dr. Olsen provided scientific leadership for the USNA germplasm program that led to unifying collection and curation efforts within the Woody Landscape Plant Germplasm Repository and subsequent germplasm characterization in the program. He is a recognized international leader in the public garden arena, providing his scientific expertise and practical knowledge to multiple national and international arboreta, urban forestry groups, and professional associations.